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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 000598

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: IRISH RESPONSE TO PRE-GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 90085

[B](#). DUBLIN 512

[C](#). DUBLIN 542

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Benton; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#). (C) Summary: On May 18, Post delivered ref A talking points to Gerard Keown, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) EU correspondent. Keown noted that Ireland viewed the China arms embargo in terms of the EU's opportunity to send a major political signal encouraging China to play a constructive international role. He said that the SFOR-EUFOR transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina showed the EU's ability to assume more robust military responsibilities, and he remarked that Ireland was considering ways to support the expanded African Union Mission in Sudan in response to AU Chairman Konare's May 17 discussions with EU officials. End summary.

China Arms Embargo

[1](#)2. (C) Going beyond ref A talking points, Emboff asked Keown to elaborate on indications from Prime Minister Ahern and DFA Secretary General Dermot Gallagher in recent discussions with

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the Ambassador that Ireland preferred to see the China arms embargo lifted (refs B and C). Keown noted that, for Ireland, the issue centered on the EU's opportunity to send a major political signal that would encourage China to play a constructive international role, such as with UN reform, North Korea, and global trade. The GOI had not initiated the proposal to lift the embargo, but wished to acknowledge changes in China since the Tiananmen era, including discernible, if slow, movement on human rights. Echoing Gallagher's points, Keown said that it was unfair to put China in with the same category of rogue states as North Korea and Zimbabwe, which also faced EU arms embargoes. At the same time, the GOI was aware of USG concerns and welcomed the opportunity to begin a strategic dialogue on East Asia. The GOI also sought to ensure that any action on the arms embargo would include concomitant efforts to prevent increases in EU weapons transfers to China. Keown added that the arms embargo was not on the May 11 GAERC agenda and that the GOI did not expect a decision on the embargo anytime soon. Emboff stressed that the Administration and Congress remained strongly opposed to the embargo's removal and would take serious interest in Ireland's position on the matter.

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[1](#)3. (C) Like the United States, Ireland and Member States were pleased with the SFOR-EUFOR transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina and with EUFOR's performance of its mandate, said Keown. The transition showed that the Berlin-Plus arrangements were effective and that the EU was capable of assuming increasingly robust military responsibilities. The Member States were also reviewing the transition with a view to fine-tuning Berlin-Plus. Keown pointed out, however, that while Defense Ministers would attend the May 23 GAERC, EU-NATO cooperation was not on the agenda.

Sudan

[1](#)4. (C) Following AU Chairperson Konare's May 17 discussions with EU officials, Member States would reflect on "who might provide what" to meet EU procurements for the expanded African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), noted Keown. The May 17 discussions had advanced the EU's ongoing negotiations with the AU on logistical support for AMIS, which extended to transportation, housing, equipment, and technology. The AU, exercising its UN-mandated lead role in Sudan, had been clear that it preferred to have European assistance rather than European troops. Ireland would consider what material support to provide and would continue to review the possibility of contributing troops to a UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur. (Note: We have reported previously that prospects for Irish troop contributions are slim, since Ireland already has soldiers in Afghanistan, Liberia, and Bosnia and is near its cap on the number of soldiers (850) who can be deployed overseas.)

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